

Liberal Catholicism

RECAP?

In the first Podcast on liberalism tied to do a few things:

1. We tried to show how much liberalism has pervaded every aspect of Society, as was illustrated in the experience of Archbishop Lefebvre.
2. We showed how it is rooted in naturalism which Cardinal Pie called the Heresy of our time and we can say the foundation of the modern world.
3. We also spoke about different causes of manifestation of Naturalism throughout History.
4. We noted that the solution begins with filling our minds with the truth as taught by centuries of magisterium.

Forecast?

In this podcast, we will pick up where we were left off by consulting the magisterium of the Church, notably *Libertas* of Leo XIII, so better understand the evils of our day.

1. Using *Libertas*, we will briefly recap/define liberalism which is to say put clear limits on what we mean by “liberalism”
2. Reference Cardinal Billot who exposed and condemned liberalism.

In the Final Podcast:

1) Briefly define Catholicism by which we will see how contradictory it is to be “liberal Catholic” Anytime we want to understand if things are compatible, we must understand both terms to know if the two realities are compatible. I use the word reality to rather than idea to point out that ideas must be a reflection of reality. Something which Fr Wiseman showed is denied by modern philosophy. Once we understand the reality of liberalism and Catholicism, the human mind should immediately see how the two are by their nature incompatible.

3. Based on their incompatibility between liberal and Catholic thought, we will look at the historical events which allowed the circle to be squared in the mind of most of the Catholic hierarchy and faithful around the world.

SO WE START WITH the Encyclical *LIBERTAS* by Leo XIII

Who was Leo XIII?

LEO XIII was Pope from 1878-1903. First pope to assume the papacy after to dissolution of the papal states which were forcefully taken from the Church in 1870 under reign of Pius IX.

Leo XIII as Cardinal Pecci was one of the chief forces behind the syllabus of errors, which condemn the 80 chief errors of the modern time.

In fact, a good reality check for all of us is to read those errors and see if we recognize them as errors or think they are truth... We may be surprised how influenced we are by liberalism and hopefully inspired to study the magisterium which will heal our minds.

80 errors is a lot...

Yes, the Syllabus divided into 10 sections starting with Naturalism as the most radical error and ending in Liberalism which flows from naturalism and is the error which we are now considering.

Let's now consider liberalism in more depth as exposed by LEO XIII:

I) Liberalism = abuse of Liberty. To understand the abuse of liberty, we must understand "liberty". A word so abused today.

First, what is Liberty: Here we quote Leo XIII's encyclical Libertas.

"Liberty, the highest of natural endowments, given only to intellectual or rational natures, confers on man this dignity – that he is "in the hand of his counsel"[1] and has power over his actions.

This we call Free will and gives Man ability to choose.

Man has free will and this confers a radical dignity on man.

That man has free will has always be defending by the Church from condemning the early manichean heresy to condemnation of the "reformers" and Jansenist.

One of the reasons the Church so defends Free will -other than the fact that the Church is the defender of the Truth- is because we must freely accept the redemption of Christ. Christ himself respects our liberty in redeeming us.

Don't people always accuse the Church of being hostile to liberty? She forbids and command, which seems against liberty..

She is on account of the fact that the Devil is the father of lies and enemies of the Truth/Church controls the language, the narrative and the communication.

In the misinformation campaign of the modern world the Church is attacked as enemy of liberty. Totally false! The Church is the enemies of what we call "License", which is the abuse of liberty. She is the enemy of the abuse of our Free will, since she does not want souls to fall into hell...

In fact, in Libertas, Pope Leo makes its clear that the Church has defended Human liberty with unequal constancy and as a dogma of the Faith

So, we must Clarify our terms so as to understand how the Church, the true defender of liberty can be called and seen as the enemy of liberty.

As the Catholic Church declares in the strongest terms the simplicity, spirituality, and immortality of the soul, so with unequalled constancy and publicity she ever also asserts its freedom. These truths she has always taught, and has sustained them as a dogma of faith, and whenever heretics or innovators have attacked the liberty of man, the Church has defended it and protected this noble possession from destruction. History bears witness to the energy with which she met the fury of the Manichaeans and others like them; and the earnestness with which in later years she defended human liberty at the Council of Trent, and against the followers of Jansenius, is known to all. At no time, and in no place, has she held truce with fatalism.

The Church as good mother does not defend a vague notion of liberty, but clearly defines it. Clarity —advocated by Our Lord— was a hallmark of pre-conciliar Church and must be brought back.

So we look at Liberty with Leo XIII for this clarity?

We have Free will which Leo XIII calls natural Liberty and the fountain of all other Liberties since we have a lack of determination in front of particular goods. This faculty is good and is at the root of our dignity. By faculty we mean the ability to act for an end.

For this a little explanation of human psychology:

The act which proceeds from the faculty of the will, is choice. Because we have the faculty of the Free will we can choose certain goods and in doing so we choose to leave behind other goods.

Choice of will follows a judgement of the intellect. The speculative intellect is made to know the truth by conforming itself to reality. The practical intellect presents to the will under the aspect of good/ perfective. A judgment is made by the intellect as to the goodness or evil of an object. The will then pursues the good presented by the intellect.

How is it that we can choose evil if we are made for the good.

This is because our intellect and will are imperfect and wounded. Due to the wounds of Original Sin, we can easily fall into error as regard the truth and pursue apparent goods.

Beside Free will what other liberties do we have?

Physical Liberty: Is freedom from any external constraint and by means of physical liberty, we are able to do anything we are physically able to do.

So just because we can does not mean we should do it?

Exactly, often not only should we not do something because it is imprudent but in many cases we must not because forbidden by moral law.

And this isn't a violation of our liberty?

No, this brings us to Moral Liberty which is the use of our Free Will as a faculty given so that we can reach an end which is happiness. Because our nature is limited, imperfect, and wounded it must be measured by and helped by the Divine Law, Natural Law, and

positive Law. The law is meant to help us reach our end. The laws are road sign which direct us to happiness as our last end.

We can now see why the Church is the great friend of liberty. It is because she wants us in heaven and knows we are weak and wounded.

To Solidify: The Church in her teaching:

1. She adamantly defends that fact that we have free will and that we are not blindly determined to an end by instinct as the animals.
2. Warns us about the dangers of abusing this Free Will. Notable misery in the life and hell in the next.
3. Defends, protects, and promotes the natural law and gives us the Divine law to direct us to heaven.

Because liberty in for the sake of an end, the more perfectly we are united to this end the more free we are. God, good angels and saints are most free.....

Even the heathen philosophers clearly recognized this truth, especially they who held that the wise man alone is free; and by the term "wise man" was meant, the man trained to live in accordance with his nature, that is, in justice and virtue.

Leo XIII lays out this truth very clearly in the next lines of the same encyclical.

“But the manner in which such dignity [Free will] is exercised is of the greatest importance, inasmuch as on the use of liberty the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend.

Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive unswervingly after his last end.

Yet, he is also able to turn aside to all other things; and, in pursuing the empty semblance of good, to disturb rightful order and to fall headlong into the destruction, which he has voluntarily chosen.

Can we highlight the need for law and distinguish between just unjust law.

The purpose of laws are to help us seek after and attain our last end.

In regards to law it we will Quote Leo XIII from *Libertas* who leans on St. Augustine

Thus, St. Augustine most wisely says: "I think that you can see, at the same time, that there is nothing just and lawful in that temporal law, unless what men have gathered from this eternal law."⁽⁵⁾ If, then, by anyone in authority, something be sanctioned out of conformity with the principles of right reason, and consequently hurtful to the commonwealth, such an enactment can have no binding force of law, as being no rule of justice, but certain to lead men away from that good which is the very end of civil society.

We know that St. Thomas Aquinas taught that an “unjust law not a law”

How does the liberal come to this conclusions that we are to be liberated from the laws of God

The liberal is rooted in naturalism and tries to apply naturalism to the moral order and politic order.

If one does not accept a higher order, he sees no need to submit his mind or will to Divine law, Natural law, ecclesiastical law, and in some cases even the civil law unless there is some utility.

For the liberal *freedom* is the fundamental principle by which all things are to be judged and organized. They do not consider it as a faculty which we must use well in order to be happy, but an absolute good.

How does this flow into philosophy and religion and politics:

- In philosophy, The human mind is the measure of all things and is not measured by an external objective reality. It exalts human dignity beyond its limits, declares that every man has the freedom and the right to choose for himself what he feels is true and good.
- Religion: "Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another... revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy".
- In Politics = Doctrine that attempts to reduce to minimum the social authority, to let individuals think, say and do whatever they please, except when an individual liberty may attack the public peace.

Hence, these followers of liberalism deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due, and proclaim that every man is the law to himself; from which arises that ethical system which they style independent morality, and which, under the guise of liberty, exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God, and substitutes a boundless license. The end of all this it is not difficult to foresee, especially when society is in question. The liberal wants to make this faculty/ability to choose an absolute good, which means that any restriction imposed on this good is an evil, which we must avoid. Nobody can tell me what to think or do.

For, when once man is firmly persuaded that he is subject to no one, it follows that the efficient cause of the unity of civil society is not to be sought in any principle external to man, or superior to him, but simply in the free will of individuals; that the authority in the State comes from the people only; and that, just as every man's individual reason is his only rule of life, so the collective reason of the community should be the supreme guide in the management of all public affairs. Hence the doctrine of the supremacy of the greater number, and that all right and all duty reside in the majority.

We see here that for the liberal, the individual conscience is the ultimate rule of morality and the collective conscience is the ultimate rule of collective morality. The personal and collective conscience is liberated from the order established by God.

Freedom of constraint is thus fundamental for the liberal.

Freedom from constraint is the fundamental good of man, sacred and inviolable – any constraint imposed on it is an evil – this freedom is the foundation on which social life should be organized, the immutable norm by which everything will be judged in law.

Liberalism is thus built on Confusion:

We see a profound confusion of liberties = external physical (action), internal physical (choice), moral (law).

- Result → liberty = absence of any constraint, even moral, which impedes man to act according to his individual inclination.

What then limits the liberal?

- Only possible limitations come political association founded on the "Social Contract". As seen in the declaration of the rights of man of 1789 which was real the suppression of the rights of man.
- Man depends only on himself → art.4 = Liberty consist in doing whatever does not hurt our neighbor.
- Only limit = neighbor's freedom → Definition opposed to traditional notion of ordered freedom, i.e. based upon the order of truth and justice.
- No submission to any transcendent authority = limits to his activity do not come from on high, but from the law established by his fellow citizens (law as emanated from "social contract").
- Authority and law emanate only from man → art.3 = The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation – art.6 = *The law is an expression of the general will.*
- Catholic formula "*omnis potestas a Deo*" is replaced by "*omnis potestas a populo*".
- Positive law, instead of being a prolongation of natural law, is no more than an invention of man taken collectively.
- Conclusion = practical atheism. There are references to "Supreme Being" – but this is a God who does not interfere with men, who has no authority over them– simply "Great Architect of the Universe".

Besides the encyclicals of the Popes are the any other warning the world about the evils of liberalism.

We can give a quotes from Cardinal Billot, who recognized and condemned liberalism by his teaching and by his life...

Who is Cardinal Billot ?

Cardinal Billot who was a great Catholic Theologian who was appointed cardinal by Pope Pius X. He helped draft the encyclical letter *Pascendi Dominici gregis* and

resigned his position as cardinal under Pius XI. Before this resignation, when asked by Pius XI about convening a Ecumenical council to finish Vatican I, the Cardinal responded, that because of their difficulties and dangers, the era of ecumenical councils seems to have definitively ended, especially the danger that the Modernists would take advantage of the Council “to make a revolution, a new 1789, the object of their hopes and dreams.”

Why did he resign?

He was very dedicated to the kingship of Christ and a close friend of Father Le Floch, the seminary rector who so influenced Archbishop Lefebvre. His resignation followed tension between him and Pius XI after the condemnation of Action Francaise, a movement which objected the ideology go the French Revolution. Father Le Floch who also supported Action Franchise, resigned from his position after 23 years as seminary rector 3 days after Cardinal Billot resigned.

Is is unusual for a Cardinal to resign:

Yes, rare indeed and his case very unusual since he was the Cardinal who crowned Pius XI by putting he tiara on his head and then 5 years later surrendered his Cardinal’s hat to this same Pope. From this we see that on very importing topics in history of the Church, there can and are different opinions in the application of the principles. Pius XI defended the right of Christ every clearly in this teaching -we think of Quas Primas on Christ’s Kingship- but in practices some errors were certainly made.

So what did Cardinal Billot teach about liberalism?

Cardinal Billot = Liberalism is "a doctrine which emancipates man from God, His Law and His Revelation; and civil society from any dependence regarding religious society, the Church, guardian and interpreter of revealed divine law".

The Cardinal makes it clear that the term “liberal Catholic” is a contradiction in terms since to be Catholics means to submit your intellect and will to a divine plan for order and to be liberal means a liberation of the intellect and will from all Order.

“The liberalism of a liberal Catholic escapes all classification and has only one sole distinctive and characteristic note, that of perfect and absolute incoherence”

To understand why there is such a opposition between liberalism and Catholicism, we will look what it means to be Catholics in the next podcast...